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# Nickerson Park Family Campground

February 19, 2022

Chairman Cohen, Chairman Gresko, and Distinguished Members of the Environmental Committee,

As a third-generation, family campground owner in Connecticut, I am writing this letter in support of House Bill 5145, An Act Concerning Portable Wastewater Containers, which permits the appropriate use of portable waste-holding tanks.

This bill is important, as it clarifies existing regulations which have been over-interpreted and misapplied by the Department of Public Health, and judiciously reconciles the inconsistencies between what is deemed safe and acceptable for the State, relative to what is deemed safe and acceptable for private campgrounds.

This latter point is of particular interest, as the discrepancies around the use of 'blue-boys' has led to confusion and frustration for both campground owners and their guests, who face unnecessary difficulties in managing their wastewater only when camping at private campgrounds in the State of Connecticut; as all other U.S. States permit the use of 'blue-boys' by campground guests, and given that the State of Connecticut recognizes 'blue-boys' as useful, effective, and safe for use in State Campgrounds.

Aside from the socio-political improprieties that arise from holding private businesses to stricter regulatory standards than the State seems to hold itself, this disparity places unfair and improper burdens and costs on the operators of private campgrounds, who have to procure expensive waste-handling equipment, and offer pump-out services to their guests; burdens and costs which do not affect the State Campgrounds with which the private sector is now competing.

Speaking as a campground owner/operator, there are a number of real-world health and environmental concerns that arise from the DPH's unclear prohibition of 'blue-boy' portable tanks. The chief concern is that broadly eliminating the use of these tanks for both blackwater-sewage and wash-water from sinks and showers, leads to campers increasingly ground-dumping their wash-water during the night, either on their campsite, or by running a hose into nearby woods or wetlands. At the very least, allowing the continued use of 'blue-boys' for safely managing wash-water would eliminate this practice.

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As you move forward in assessing House Bill 5145, know that campground owners are not seeking special treatment, nor do we not value environmental safety or public health; we are simply looking for our representatives to recognize and reconcile the discrepancies between the regulations placed on State and Private Campgrounds, and to clarify that the use of 'blue-boys' in managing wastewater is safe and effective for all campers visiting Connecticut.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and public service.

Sincerely,

Chris Nickerson  
Nickerson Park Family Campground